

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
for  
AMENDED FERRIS BUGMAN EA No. OR-110- 01-009

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

The Amended Ferris Bugman Environmental Assessment (attached) analyzes a proposal to improve the ecological health of federal land on approximately 3,754 acres in the Middle Applegate Watershed.

The proposed action and project design features are further described in the attached Environmental Assessment (EA). This FONSI and attached EA is tiered to the *Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines* (USDI, USDA 2001) and the *Medford District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (RMP)* (USDI 1995b). These Resource Management Plans incorporate the *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl and the Standards and Guidelines for Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (NFP) (USDA and USDI 1994). These documents are available at the Medford BLM office and the Medford BLM web site at <<http://www.or.blm.gov/Medford/>>.

Through the EA process, the interdisciplinary team reviewed the following critical elements of the human environment as they relate to this project: air quality, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), cultural resources, environmental justice, farmlands, floodplains, Native American religious concerns, invasive nonnative species, threatened and endangered species, hazardous/solid wastes, water quality, wetlands/riparian zones, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and wilderness. No substantive site specific environmental changes would result from implementing the proposed action or alternatives as discussed in the associated EA. Should threatened or endangered plants or cultural or paleontological resources be discovered, they would be protected.

The Amended Ferris Bugman EA was advertised for a 30-day public review period beginning on July 27, 2001. Written comments were received from seven organizations (Headwaters, Sierra Club, NAWPA,, ONRC, TELAV, KSWC/Siskiyou Project, & SOTIA), and 21 individuals. The Amended Ferris Bugman Interdisciplinary Team reviewed the comments and did not find any information that would change the BLM's determination that there are no significant impacts associated with the proposed action.

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service issued a Letter of Concurrence on March 14, 2002 and found that the proposed action was Not Likely to Adversely Affect Southern Oregon/Northern California coho salmon or their designated critical habitat. Formal consultation for the northern spotted owl was completed for timber sales in the project area (BO 1-7-01-F-032). A no effect determination was made by BLM regarding the federally listed *Fritillaria gentneri*.

On the basis of the information contained in the attached Amended EA and all other information available to me as summarized above, it is my determination that the proposed action alternative does not constitute a significant impact, beyond those previously identified in the tiered Medford District RMP Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). For this reason, a new EIS will not be prepared.

  
Ashland Field Manager

09-03-02  
Date

Decision Record  
for the  
Amended Ferris Bugman EA No. OR-110-01-009

Decision Record & Rationale

My decision is to proceed with the proposed action as described in the attached EA. The Ferris Bugman project provides an opportunity to accomplish many different watershed restoration objectives for promoting a healthy forest ecosystem while supplying forest products that will help maintain the stability of local and regional economies. Fire suppression and other past management activities have resulted in very dense vegetative stands at risk of catastrophic wildfire and/or insect epidemics. Tree density is currently inhibiting the development of late-successional characteristics in many areas. This project will use a variety of tools to mimic the role that fire historically played in the ecosystem by reducing understory density, creating openings for species such as Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine, and reintroducing fire through controlled, prescribed burning. At the same time, this project will help facilitate the progression of late-successional forest characteristics by maintaining or improving existing structural and species diversity and protection from catastrophic wildfire.

Mitigation Measure #1 (Ch. 4 Pg. 49) would eliminate harvesting overstory trees having a diameter greater than 20 inches. This measure is not accepted because; 1) it would put some old-growth trees and shade intolerant species such as pines and incense cedar at risk of decline or mortality. Some old-growth trees and larger second growth Douglas-fir trees greater than 20 inches diameter are competing for light and nutrients. This mitigation measure would have contradicted the objectives of the silvicultural prescriptions to grow and maintain large trees. Also, during the thinning operations, a limited number of trees greater than 20 inches, are expected to be felled to meet safety and operational objectives.

Mitigation Measure #2 (Ch. 4 Pg. 50) to reduce the length (1.6 BLM miles) of the new road construction is not accepted because access to 724 acres (outlined in the proposed action) of non-commercial (Hardwood/Brushfield) treatments is needed to reduce the wildfire hazard. Also, the cost of managing 285 acres of commercial forest land will be reduced by constructing this road.

Mitigation Measure #3 (Ch. 4 Pg. 52) would eliminate the new road construction (0.6 miles) along the northern portion of Slagle Creek. This measure is not accepted because direct access is needed to re-introduce fire into the ecosystem and the cost of managing 230 acres of commercial forest would increase if this road is not constructed.

Mitigation Measure #4 (Ch. 4 Pg. 53) reserves all large trees in two conifer stands (approximately 10 acres total) near the ridge of Slagle and Humbug Creeks. This measure is not accepted because it would not promote a healthy forest in the long term. Because of openings created by past tree mortality (due to tree overstocking) in these two stands, an understory of Douglas-fir regeneration (approximately 200 to 500 trees per acre with a height ranging from 8 to 30') has established. The proposed action is to reserve the largest and best 100 trees per acre in the understory and to reserve the largest and best 16 to 25 trees per acre of the overstory. All overstory trees greater than 38" will be reserved.

Upon careful review of the information available to me, I have determined that this project will facilitate the restoration of forest health in the Middle Applegate Watershed.

  
Ashland Field Manager

09-03-02  
Date